



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING




JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

August 29, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Report on Proposed Redesign of the Blue Ribbon Schools Award Program

In July 2005, the State Board of Education discussed recommendations concerning a proposed redesign of the Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School Program. Following the discussion, the redesign proposals were referred to staff for discussion with practitioners and members of the current Blue Ribbon Select Committee (BRSC). On August 5, 2005, representatives of the BRSC met with staff to consider the proposals. The notes from the meeting are attached (Attachment A). The committee members present felt that the recommendations were far reaching and merited careful consideration and discussion. They were especially mindful of initiatives such as High School Reform, High School Content Expectations, and the School Improvement Framework that could impact on any redesign considerations.

The Department recommends that the program remain as is for the 2005-2006 school year. Staff from the Office of School Improvement will work with the committee to draft a wide range of recommendations that will ensure coherence across programs that support high priority schools as well as highlighting the efforts of schools with successful practices. Staff anticipates a report to the State Board of Education in Spring 2006.

Attachment

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**Blue Ribbon School Committee
Meeting Notes – August 5, 2005
Lansing, Michigan**

Those attending (Attachment B) the meeting were in agreement that there was no support for changing the award criteria by giving points to low SES schools for their improvement. It was felt by the group that this was discriminatory. The group also noted that there had been recipients of the Blue Ribbon award from districts with high poverty levels.

Those in attendance agreed to the following for immediate implementation for the 2005 – 2006 school year:

Announce the 2005 – 2006 Blue Ribbon Schools (BRS) process for secondary level buildings with an adjusted timeline.

Utilize secondary level award winners (2003 – 2004 competition) for the visitation committees this year. The effect of this change is that the visitation committees will be comprised of peers.

The recipients of the 2004–2005 awards will participate in the visitations during the 2006–2007 school year.

Conduct additional informational sessions in areas other than the current east/west arrangement. This may encourage greater participation throughout the state.

- Continue to encourage former recipients to serve as mentors to the 2005 – 2006 applicants.

The following items emerged as discussion points for the work of the Blue Ribbon Committee during the 2005 – 2006 school year. The goal would be a report to the State Board of Education in Spring 2006.

Develop an improved marketing/recruiting program to encourage greater geographic representation among applicants

- Provide support for applicants. Sessions – timing- location (other Blue Ribbon (BR) school/staff, MDE)
- Find way to acknowledge that it is more difficult for schools of high poverty to apply (logistics/release of staff to create the application/release of staff for information sessions)
- Address the perception that there is no time to apply for the BR when other factors including daily work of the school and improvement issues take precedence (NCLB)
- Need to encourage schools to apply
- Address the perception that it is costly to the district/building to free the writers from daily responsibilities in order to complete the application
- Support for applications – MDE obligation/ 4-7 sessions

Discuss the application criteria for the BRS and make changes as appropriate

- Recipients agree to serve as a mentor to a High Priority School in the state.
- Geographic location
- Agreement by both schools to the mentoring arrangement
- Cost
- Assignments made by OSI
- Other

Review Visitation and Selection Team Make-up

- Review Teams – broaden to include non-participants – 2006-2007
 - OSI staff
 - Non-participant EA's (a learning/marketing tool)
- Involve parents from previous winners in visitation committee
 - Consider PTA/PTO representation (another learning/marketing tool)

Explore ways to have recipients of the state Blue Ribbon eligible for the national Blue Ribbon

- Federal more prestigious
- State approval more rigorous

Discuss criteria for district BRS

- Size issue between a K-12 bldg/district and large districts with multiple buildings

Discuss ways to recognize sustained improvement of schools not yet eligible for the BRS recognition

- Develop criteria (Golden Apple concept w/o cash awards)
- Tie into Blue Ribbon – as a stepping stone leading to a BRS application
- Recognizes that a school is on its way – be consistent

Align and crosswalk the BRS with the School Improvement Framework

- **Miscellaneous**

- Concern with Standards and Poors
- How do we acknowledge it is harder for schools of high poverty?
- Leadership is strong and important in district.

**BLUE RIBBON SELECTION MEETING
August 5, 2005, Attendees**

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Gerald S. Maiorano
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Michael Horn, Principal
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Mr. Jamie Hosford
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George Stamas, Superintendent
Montcalm Area ISD
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Dr. James Bird, Superintendent
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Sherman Ostrander, Superintendent
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MDE Staff

Betty Underwood, Assistant Director
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Linda Forward, Supervisor
Curriculum and Instruction -
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David Mills, Education Consultant
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